CHRIST's *Inſtructions to his Followers concerning the ſuffering* Galileans;

A

SERMON

PREACH'D in the

Pariſh-Churches

OF

STORRINGTON and PARHAM in SUSSEX,

On *Friday, February* 6, 1756.
Being the Day appointed for a *Public Faſt.*

By WILLIAM BYASS, CURATE of thoſe Pariſhes.

Hear the Rod and who hath appointed it.
MICAH vi, 9.

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MDCCLVI.

LUKE XIII, Verſes 1, 2, and 3.

There were preſent at that Seaſon ſome that told him of the Galileans, *whoſe Blood* Pilate *had mingled with their Sacrifices: And* JESUS *anſwering, ſaid unto them, Suppoſe ye that theſe* Galileans *were Sinners above all the* Galileans, *becauſe they ſuffered ſuch Things? I tell you, nay: But except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.*

THOUGH the Ways of GOD are unſearchable, and we are forbid to apply particular Puniſhments to particular Sins; yet we cannot help diſcerning the Judgments of the LORD viſibly exerciſed among the Children of Men. There are often ſuch remarkable Interpoſitions of divine Power, that we muſt acknowledge them to be the Work of the LORD alone; or puniſhing with Vengeance the impenitent Children of Diſobedience; or teaching the World the dreadful Effects of Iniquity; or calling us to Repentance by theſe his marvellous Acts; or trying the Sincerity of the righteous and faithful. And we

may think ourſelves happy too, even to Amazement, that we have a FATHER in Heaven, who thus careth for us;—whoſe long-ſuffering Goodneſs not only leadeth us to Repentance, but who ſeeketh alſo to ſerve us by the very Interpoſitions of his wrathful Indignation—remembering Mercy in the Midſt of Judgment.

IT is our great Misfortune, that when we are in Proſperity, we think that we ſhall never be moved. We flatter ourſelves with the viſionary Proſpects of imaginary Happineſs: we go on in the Ways of Pleaſure and ſinful Deluſion, without ever dreaming of Danger. And as in the Days that were before the Flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in Marriage, until the Day that *Noah* entered into the Ark, and knew not until the Flood came and took them all away; ſo we are willing to loſe no Part in our Voluptuouſneſs. We eat and drink with the drunken; we give ourſelves up to the alluring Indulgences of vexatious Vanity: nor ever think of any approaching Change; until, alas! we are ſurprized, like thoſe unhappy Sufferers, with ſudden and inevitable Deſtruction, and our LORD coming in an Hour that we were not aware of, appoints us our Portion, as careleſs Servants, with the Hypocrites in the great Deep of hopeleſs Miſery.

IN this fatal Lethargy the ordinary Courſe of Providence, however beautiful, ſtriking, and glo-

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rious, has but very little Influence: As if our Eyes were blinded, that we could not ſee, and our Hearts hardened that we could not perceive; we underſtand none of theſe Things. The Judgments of the LORD muſt come like Lightning upon us unawares, ſtriking with aſtoniſhing Terror our benumbed Souls.—We muſt ſee the Wrath of GOD interpoſing and breaking down the high Places of the Mighty;—the Earth muſt reel to and fro like a Drunkard;—in the City muſt be left Deſolation, and the Gate muſt be ſmitten with Deſtruction, before we can be rouſed from our flattered Security, our falſe Piece of Iniquity; before we can be brought to a pious Reflection upon our paſt Ways, and learn Righteouſneſs.

THE good, the vigilant and religious Soul, influenced rather by Love than by Fear, will admire indeed the daily Goodneſs of his GOD, and his Face evermore with Prayer, Supplication, and Thankſgiving.

CHARMED with thoſe common Inſtances of Wiſdom, of Goodneſs, of Mercy in the World, which are daily diſplayed to the Eye of every thinking Being, he will want no extraordinary Marks of Indignation;—he will not want to know the Terror of the LORD to be perſuaded, that the evil and wicked Doer is an Abomination to Him, and that he will viſit in his Wrath the Children of Diſobedience. But it is not ſo with

with the careleſs Sons of Luxury and Pleaſure, a People that delight in Iniquity; No! the very reverſe is generally the Caſe. When GOD's Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteouſneſs: but let Favour be ſhewed to the Wicked, and he is ready to aſk, what is the ALMIGHTY, that we ſhould ſerve him? or what Profit ſhould we have, if we pray unto Him? yet will he not learn Righteouſneſs. His Conſcience muſt be awakened with Signs and Wonders. He muſt look and tremble at the Tokens of great Tribulation: he muſt look and ſay, with unwilling Conviction; "Behold, the LORD cometh out of his Place to puniſh the Inhabitants of the Earth for their Iniquity;" and then perhaps he may (and then only will he) fly unto the Hills to cover him, or ſeek Mercy and Forgiveneſs at the Hands of a provoked GOD. Oh! the bewitching Deceitfulneſs of Sin, which can thus call its Votaries to Sleep, thus flatter them into a miſtaken Senſe of Safety; till the Anger of the LORD is juſt coming upon them to the uttermoſt, and they are upon the very Brink of Deſtruction!

BUT behold the Loving-kindneſs of our gracious GOD, leaſt we ſhould thus flatter ourſelves with the vain Hopes of Quietneſs and Repoſe in the Days of Darkneſs. He mercifully ſevere has viſited the Earth with Thunder and Earthquake. He hath ſhaken the very Foundations of the Hills,

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that we might not ſleep, as do others; but be vigilant and ſober in working out our Salvation; that we might conſider our Ways, look back upon our paſt Iniquities with a Sorrow unto Repentance, and turn unto him, who is only able to ſave us. The Earth has moved at the Preſence of our God.—We ourſelves have in ſome Meaſure felt its dreadful Effects; And our Neighbours have ſeen the Confuſion of Things; as if indeed our LORD GOD was coming to judge the World in Righteouſneſs, and miniſter true Judgment unto his People.

We have been alarmed; I ſay, in the moſt awakening Manner: They that did feed delicately in a neighbouring Nation, are deſolate in the Streets; and it is of the LORD's Mercy, that we are not conſumed. What then, I beſeech you, muſt this teach us? Muſt we like the miſtaken People, with whom our SAVIOUR is reaſoning in the Text, think that our ſuffering Brethren were Sinners above ourſelves? Be not deceived. Let us not deſpiſe the kind Chaſtiſements of our GOD, leaſt a worſe Thing come unto us. Let us rather look upon this marvellous Work, as a Warning to a careleſs and wicked World; as an Angel of GOD, informing us, that though our heavenly FATHER has no Pleaſure in the Deſtruction of any People, yet, unleſs we repent, we ſhall all likewiſe periſh.

In the Words of my Text, we have the Reaſoning of our Saviour upon a very remarkable Incident. There were ſome of his Followers, who told him of the *Galileans*, whoſe Blood *Pilate* mingled with their Sacrifices. This they thought to be a Judgment of God upon them: And as theſe *Galileans* are ſuppoſed to have been a Band of ſeditious People, whom *Pilate* ſurpriſed at their Altars, they flattered themſelves, that God had now interpoſed to ſtand their Friend, and cut off thoſe Enemies, whom the Power of Government could not eaſily ſuppreſs: They, no doubt, triumphed upon the Occaſion: The Anſwer of *Chriſt* ſhews as much. But you ſee, they were moſt egregiouſly diſappointed. They had (as it is too generally the Caſe,) drawn very wrong Concluſions from this Caſualty. They had liſtened to the vain Suggeſtions of Pride, and deceived themſelves. And accordingly we find the Son of God not only correcting theſe their Errors, we alſo find him at the ſame Time inſtructing them what uſe they ought to make of theſe extraordinary Interpoſitions, and what Conſequences they muſt expect, if they did not make this proper Uſe of them. You muſt eaſily perceive how very applicable the Caſe is to ourſelves at preſent, and how proper a Subject to diſcourſe upon at this Opportunity. I ſhall therefore beg Leave to make it my Buſineſs to examine, what

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we may particularly learn from the Reaſoning of our SAVIOUR upon this Occaſion. And,

FIRST, He corrects the Error of accounting for the Judgments of GOD upon others, and imputing thoſe ſeeming Inſtances of his Indignation to the extraordinary Guilt of the unhappy Sufferers.

IT was not a Fault of Preſumption peculiar to the *Jews* alone to pry into the hidden Counſels of the LORD, and account for his Judgments upon the Earth: It is, alas, a very common Foible. We even in theſe preſent Ages ſtill do the ſame: But what pray, can be more fooliſhly weak and irreligious? GOD often indeed interpoſeth with his ſeeming Wrath; and appears terrible in his Judgments.—He ſtriketh ſome as wicked Men in the open Sight of others—He cauſeth his Judgment to come, but whether for Correction or for his Mercy who can tell; For touching the ALMIGHTY we cannot find Him out; He is excellent in Power, in Judgment, in Mercy. His Ways are as high as Heaven, and as deep as Hell: and what Preſumption? how widely different muſt it be from the humble, charitable Meekneſs of Chriſtianity, which is not puffed up, which behaveth itſelf not unſeemly, which thinketh no Evil, thus to afflict them whom GOD afflicteth, and perſecute them whom GOD perſecuteth; and thus to promiſe ourſelves

Peace, Righteouſneſs, and the Favour of God, at the Expence of the Peace, Righteouſneſs, and Salvation of our Brethren. Be well aſſured, that it is the very groſſeſt Error that we can fall into; there is Pride, the Root of all Evil, and Fountain of human Miſery, moſt certainly at the Bottom. We never think, that God is againſt us upon theſe Occaſions? No, no; we always take care to think Him our Friend. But we ſhould do well to remember, that it was a phariſaical Pride, which juſtified itſelf, which thought itſelf righteous, and deſpiſed others. It was not the modeſt Deportment of our more humble, but far more righteous Saviour. He was in a manner peculiar to himſelf, lowly of Heart, charitable and meek; and they, who profeſs to be Followers of Him, ought to learn of Him to be humble and meek;—ought to mourn with them that mourn, expreſs the natural Feelings of Tenderneſs and Compaſſion for, and not by raſh and preſumptuous Judgment think themſelves righteous above their ſuffering Fellow-Creatures.

Pride is very apt to deceive us; we are generally glad to ſpeak Peace to ourſelves, when the God of Peace ſpeaketh no Peace: And it is no Wonder, that we cannot without much Difficulty indeed be perſuaded, that God's viſible Judgments upon others are intended to awaken our Conſciences, are like Stars to conduct us to the Son of God, like Tapers lighted up to direct our benighted

nighted Souls from the Shades of Darkneſs, Iniquity and Deſtruction, into the Way everlaſting, to the narrow Gates of Peace and Salvation. We ſhould do well to ſtand upon our Guard againſt this common Stumbling-Block. We may depend upon it, that we are never more in Danger of falling, than when we give way to this ſpiritual Pride, truſt in our Strength, that we ſtand ſafely, and deſpiſe the Rod.

THIS fatal Senſe of our own imaginary Security, is like the Cloud before the *Egyptians*. It was a Cloud and Darkneſs to them, 'till they were inſenſibly led into the Midſt of the Sea, and overthrown; ſo that there remained not one of them. It leads Men down into the Pit, and into the Shades of Death, like the Brute that hath no Underſtanding, that can look on the Knife which ſlayeth its Fellow, without the leaſt Horror; without any Senſe of its own approaching Danger. Oh! ſays our GOD, that my People were wiſe, would underſtand this, would conſider their latter End! would conſider how I can ſend forth my Wrath, and conſume them as ſtubble; and how *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* are ſet forth as an Example, ſuffering Vengeance of eternal Fire, that they may repent of their Sins, and fly from the dreadful Wrath to come!———Think ye, that we are righteous above thoſe our Neighbours, who have ſuffered the more dire Effects of an extenſive and dreadful Earthquake? Think ye that the Inquiſi-

tion, the crying Sin of their Perſecutions of Hereticks and Infidels, or any other particular Practice brought this Deſtruction upon them, rather than upon ourſelves? If they had enjoyed the Truth, the Light of the Goſpel eclipſed with no intervening Clouds of ſuperſtitious Corruption, and impoſed Tradition, who knows what Moderation what Chriſtian Meekneſs they might have ſhown? And aſk your Hearts I beſeech you; caſt an eye upon the vicious Diſſoluteneſs of this Nation: They if rightly examined and conſidered, will tell you, I dare ſay, as well as our SAVIOUR, nay, but except ye repent, ye ſhall likewiſe periſh. conſult the Oracles of our GOD, and they will teach you far different Sentiments. They will tell you, that you ſhould judge not, leaſt you be judged; that we ought to take Care, that, when our LORD cometh, we be not overcharged with ſurfeiting and Drunkenneſs, and the Cares of this Life; that we ought at all Times to have Oil in our Lamps; and that, bleſſed is that Servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find watching.

SECONDLY, Our SAVIOUR teaches every one of us in particular, the Neceſſity of Repentance. That unleſs we repent, and bring forth in us Fruits meet for Repentance, we cannot be ſaved. The extraordinary Interpoſitions of GOD may be a Myſtery to us; we may not be able to comprehend the Ends and Deſigns of his moſt awakening

ning Judgments (for his Ways are paſt finding out, and who hath been his Counſellor) yet we cannot miſtake in this, if we bring the Caſe home to ourſelves, and when God's Judgments are in the Earth reſolve heartily to learn Righteouſneſs. The Righteous, we may be aſſuredly certain, will not loſe their Reward; God is their Friend. They have the ſpecial Promiſes of the Goſpel reſerved for them, even a Crown of Glory which fadeth not: And if they perſevere unto the End, laying themſelves in the Duſt for their paſt Tranſgreſſions (for in many Things we offend all) and with a hearty Faith unto Repentance; bringing forth the ſaving Fruits of Holineſs, they need not be afraid, though the Hills be removed and carried into the Midſt of the Sea, they need not deſpair of ſeeing God, of obtaining thoſe raviſhing Joys which are in his Preſence for evermore; of being thought meet to be made Partakers of that exceeding Weight of Glories to be revealed. For God is a very ſure Help in Time of Trouble; and he is faithful who has promiſed.

But the End of Vice and Iniquity is far different: they may have indeed the Indulgence of ſenſual Appetites to recommend them; it may be ſo. But alas! their Conſequence is, what? Peace of Mind, and an eaſy Conſcience reſting in Hope? No; they will moſt certainly at laſt bite like a Serpent and ſting like an Adder. There is no Peace to the Wicked.—Wickedneſs leadeth

us to that unhappy Manſion in its Father's Houſe, which abounds with weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth, where the Fire is not quenched and the Worm dieth not.—Tribulation and Anguiſh will ſurely be upon every Soul that doth Evil, in that ſecond Death.—And "depart from me ye Workers of Iniquity into everlaſting Flames," is the Sentence of CHRIST JESUS himſelf, and a Sentence too which nothing but Repentance in this Life can deliver us from; and which nothing, no, not the Merits of a bleſſed REDEEMER, can deliver the Impenitent from, in the Life to come.

THERE is a natural Tendency in Sin to a State of Miſery; it entirely changes the Nature of the Soul, by habituating it to the Company of ſavage Paſſions, and the Indulgence only of carnal Affections; it renders it entirely incapable of more heavenly Joys, more pure refined ſpiritual Tranſports, and unhappy even in the Preſence of the Bleſſed and Pious. By long Cuſtom it plunges the Soul into ſuch a dread State of Horror, as much reſembles that Blackneſs of Darkneſs, for which we are told, the impenitent Sinner is reſerved. What? muſt we then, let me aſk, let Sin reign in our mortal Bodies? muſt we continue in Sin, till we are hardened through the Deceitfulneſs of it? Oh! No: Let us abſtain from fleſhly Luſts, which war againſt the Soul.

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Let us break off thoſe our Sins by Repentance, the Wages of which are moſt certainly Death.

You cannot well be ignorant how fleſhly Luſts do war againſt the Soul. You cannot well be ignorant, how Sin and Wickedneſs render us incapable of ſpiritual Enjoyments. Scripture has told us, that we muſt become new Creatures in *Chriſt*; and daily Obſervation will convince us of the Neceſſity of putting off the old Man. Daily Obſervation will convince us, how Wickedneſs diſguſts the holy Converſation of the upright; how little the diſſolute and abandoned reliſh thoſe Words of Soberneſs and Truth, the reaſonable Service of our God, which delight the religious Soul, and deſpiſe thoſe Means of Grace, which through *Chriſt* are only able to ſave us.——We may be able to form ſome faint Idea of what we are to be hereafter, from what we know of ourſelves at preſent. And perhaps we are therefore commanded to prove our ownſelves, whether we be in the Faith, or whether we be Reprobates indeed. Let us then for once look into our Breaſts and examine our Hearts.—Are we glad, when they ſay unto us, come, let us go into the Houſe of the Lord? are the Laws of our God ſweeter to our Lips than Honey, or the Honey-Comb? Do we never do wickedly but with true Sorrow and Repentance? are we ready always to do good, and to diſtribute with inward Feelings of Joy and Satisfaction? if this is our Caſe, and we perſe-

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vere; then are we not far from the Kingdom of Heaven; and our Happineſs will ſhine more and more, like our Righteouſneſs unto Noon-day.

But if on the other hand, we diſreliſh every Act of Devotion; if we commit Sin with Greedineſs, without Remorſe of Conſcience or Contrition; if we chuſe to go into the Houſe of Laughter, and revel in the wanton Indulgences of depraved Appetites, than in the Houſe of Mourning, and humble ourſelves before our God with pious Reſolutions of Amendment, we may depend upon it, that we are then in the very Gall of Bitterneſs and Bond of Iniquity; that we cannot expect ſo much as to be even capable of reliſhing the Joys of Heaven, and that except we repent, we ſhall likewiſe periſh—periſh everlaſtingly.

We ſhould do well then to provide for a Futurity in its due Seaſon, to repent and be converted, that our Sins may be blotted out. We may perhaps wiſh (ah fooliſh People, why cannot we wiſh ſo now) when they are hid from our Eyes, that we had known in this our State of Probation, the Things that belonged to our Peace. But it is much too late to think of repenting, when the Hand-writing appears againſt us upon the Wall: When we have filled up the Meaſure of our Wrath, and immediately our Soul is required of us, to be plunged with tortured *Dives* into great Torments, to bathe in Regions of unconſuming Fire. Take Care that you be not deceived. God is not to be mocked.

mocked. If we would avert the Judgment of the LORD, if we would mitigate that fiery Indignation, which conſumes his Adverſaries, we muſt ſeek Repentance in the acceptable Time, we muſt pray for Peace in the Day of Salvation. It will moſt undoubtedly be in vain to fly unto the Hills to cover us, when Judgment is beginning at the Houſe of GOD; for there is no Darkneſs, nor Shadow of Death, where the Workers of Iniquity may then hide themſelves. The Righteous will ſcarcely be ſaved, and where I beſeech you, will the Ungodly and Sinner appear?

THIRDLY, Our bleſſed SAVIOUR teaches us in the Text, that Sin is not only the eternal Deſtruction of any Perſon, but alſo the temporal Deſtruction of any People or Nation. He is here propheſying the approaching Deſtruction of that State, which while it continued, was ſupported in a Manner the moſt remarkable; and which was deſtroyed in a Manner equally exceeding all others in Miſery; I mean the State of the *Iſraelites*. Except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.

I cannot take Time now to conſider, how, for Want of repenting, they ſuffered the Abomination of Deſolation; how the Vials of GOD's Wrath was moſt miraculouſly poured out upon them, and how the fiery Indignation of the LORD, in the moſt extraordinary Inſtances of Miſery and Tribulation, came upon them to the uttermoſt.

This would lead me too far from my preſent Purpoſe and Deſign; and the fulfilling of the Prediction ſufficiently proves to us, all that we advance at preſent, *viz.* That not only the State of the *Jews*, but every other Polity whatever, muſt come to Deſtruction, if not upheld by Religion and Virtue.—That we of this Country, in particular, however flouriſhing we may ſeem at preſent, if we would not periſh, if we would continue the Proſperity, the Strength, the Honour, the Happineſs of our Nation, muſt firſt repent, muſt break off thoſe our national Sins, which are a Reproach to any People, and learn Righteouſneſs, which exalteth a Nation.

Religion is the only Pillar of Braſs, the only Wall of Defence, which will ſhield us from Deſtruction in the perilous Times: the Breaſt-plate of Righteouſneſs and the Shield of Faith will only ſecure to us thoſe Bleſſings which we now enjoy, and make us a happy and powerful People. If we truſt in Vice, if we forſake the weighty Matters of the Law, Juſtice, Mercy, Faith, and giving ourſelves to Laſciviouſneſs and the Works of Darkneſs, place our Religion in trifling Ceremonies; we may depend upon it, that the Miſery of our State will keep pace with our Iniquities; and as we grow in the one, we ſhall alſo grow in the other. It is not with Nations as with particular People; Vice may ſometimes

times flouriſh and look gay in this Life, and Virtue loſe her Reward from the Children of Men. There is often one Event to the Righteous and to the Wicked; and GOD can ſet all theſe Things right again, by a future Day of Retribution. He can then vindicate his Juſtice. But with Bodies politic he cannot deal thus: they muſt either ſtand or fall, as their Tranſgreſſions are heavy upon them. And as it happened with the State of the *Jews*, a *Babylonian*, an *Egyptian*, a *Syrian*, or a *Roman* will riſe as a flaming Miniſter of Heaven to chaſtiſe their Impiety, as a Scourge to their Offences, whenever they are ripe for Deſtruction.

THERE is a natural Tendency in vicious Diſſoluteneſs to deſtroy a State. It enervates the body politic, as well as body natural. It relaxes the Nerves of the one, as well as the other; and never fails to entail Diſeaſes upon both. Higher Powers will of courſe degenerate in their Patriot-Zeal: every unexpected Check upon their Ambition, their Intereſt, their Caprice, will make Foes of Friends; while the Commonalty will be ſurely diſſatisfied under the mildeſt and wiſeſt of Governments. When a Nation, I ſay, is become diſſolute and abandoned, Liberty become Licenciouſneſs, and Power degenerates into tyrannical Cruelty. Society was never known to be ſupported without Religion; and it will certainly diſband, whenever Religion is once ſuppreſſed.

The natural Luſts and Paſſions of the old Man, not only war againſt the Spirit within; they lead us to Anarchy and Confuſion without, to open Rebellion, and to reſiſt the Power which is ordained of God, if not awed and reſtrained with the Duties of Religion, and the Checks of an inward Feeling of Conſcience. A Spirit of Patriotiſm dies away, together with the Spirit of Religion. And we do but in vain preach up Loyalty, if we believe not, that He who ſtilleth the Tumults of the People, commands us to honour the King, to let every Soul be ſubject to the higher Powers, and binds the Conſcience down to due Allegiance.

But to expoſtulate a little upon the Whole, and draw to a Concluſion. The late Accounts of Things from Abroad are even ſhocking to Humanity; and we have Reaſon to hear, believe, and tremble, when Deſtruction ſeems thus hard at hand. But we ſhould do well to provide againſt the worſt. We ſhould take the Alarm. We ſhould not be inſenſible to the awakening Calls of God. Repentance unto good Works is moſt certainly our beſt means to eſcape Death, our beſt means of Salvation. If under the Ruins of our own Houſes we ſhould be buried; if the Earth, thus convulſed, ſhould open by an Earthquake and ſwallow us up quick; would it not, let me aſk, would it not, I ſay, be our greateſt

greateſt Happineſs, as Particulars, that we had before began to ſeek Repentance with Tears, to commit ourſelves to God as unto a tender Father, and a faithful Creator, with Faſting, Prayer, and well-doing?—And what, I beſeech you could with greater Efficacy move God to avert his Judgments from our Nation, in general, than thus to truſt in Him for our Salvation, be made ſenſible of our own Unworthineſs, confeſs our Wickedneſs, and be very ſorry for our Sin? God has no Pleaſure in the Deſtruction of any People; he is gracious and long-ſuffering to us-ward, and they that truſt in Him, as their only Rock of Salvation, ſhall be even like Mount *Sion*, which may not be removed, but ſtandeth faſt for ever.

We are happy, my Brethen, in the Exerciſe of an eſtabliſhed Religion, which makes and owns the Service of our God (as indeed it ought to be) perfect Freedom, a reaſonable Service. Our Church is not burthened either with the beggarly Elements of Superſtition, or diſtracted with the fanatical Errors of Enthuſiaſm. We enjoy the pure Profeſſion of *Chriſt Jeſus*.—The The Goſpel interpreted by right Reaſon, is the ſole Baſis of our Faith: And neither the prieſtly Impoſitions of oral Tradition, nor the mad rapſodic Interpretations of cabaliſtical Writers, thank God! are Part of our eſtabliſhed Religion,

ligion, have corrupted our Opinions, our Sentiments of Chriſtianity. We are happy in the moſt perfect Form of Government! We are not carried away with the mad Sallies of unreſtrained Liberty; nor are we oppreſſed by the arbitrary Sway of tyrannical Sovereignty. We live in a State, where there is the happieſt Temper of Liberty and Power; where our Properties are neither endangered by the unlimited Authority of a Governor, nor the Depredations of an unreſtrained Rabble.

We cannot tell really whether we ſhould ſuffer more from a Liberty, or princely Power uncontrouled. The Spirit of a *Briton* would certainly be unhappy under a deſpotic Government; and alas! what fatal Convulſions would iſſue from the rivalling Ambition of a ſpirited, but untempered Freedom! Happy People; neither is our Lot.

Our Liberty is ſecured by a due Patriot Spirit in our Houſes of Council: we are happy under the Mildneſs, the Prudence, the juſt Adminiſtration of a religious and gracious Prince, that careth for us; and nothing can endanger the Felicity of our Nation, but a Want of Righteouſneſs. If Luxury and Vice do not ſpread their Contagion, do not enervate our Conſtitution, do not make us loyal, from Caprice rather than Conſcience, do not make us uneaſy under the beſt of Govern-

Governments, do not fit us for Ruin and Deſtruction, for the Wrath of God, we may ſtill be able to ſtand againſt the Inroads of the Oppreſſor; and our moſt bitter and powerful Enemies will not be able to prevail againſt us. For Righteouſneſs exalteth a Nation, and it is Sin only that is the Reproach, the Ruin of any People.

What then? muſt we relax, in the Obſervance of Piety and Goodneſs, of Religion and Virtue? muſt we by our Works of Darkneſs and unregenerate Diſſoluteneſs provoke God to plague us with Factions and ſundry Kinds of politic Diſeaſes, to viſit us with Judgments, with Earthquakes, with Deſtruction? muſt we give up our Religion, the very beſt of Religions, for Popery, for Prieſtcraft, for the Corruptions of an impoſed Tradition? muſt we give up ourſelves, our Rights, our Properties, our Liberty, our all to our natural Enemies, the incroaching Oppreſſors, the faithful Sycophants of Injuſtice? The Affairs of State were never in a more critical Juncture, never turned upon ſo critical an Hinge. We are juſt upon the Eve of a War with our moſt powerful Enemy; and all our Strength is exerted. Our Miniſtry have appointed this Day as a Day of general Faſting and Humiliation upon this Account. And muſt we, I ſay, look upon theſe Things with Unconcern; muſt we hazard all our temporal Advantages, and go down into the

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Pit of Deſtruction in a State of Inſenſibility? No; no; my Brethren, let us devoutly join in with the Service of this Day: Let us reſolve heartily to break off our Sins by Repentance: Let us turn unto our God with Faſting and Prayer, with Sorrow and Contrition, with the moſt pious Vows and Reſolutions of Amendment. If we follow after Piety and Virtue: If we purſue with Warmth the Ways of Righteouſneſs, we have Nothing to fear; our Enemies and Oppreſſors can never hurt us; for if the Lord is on our Side, we need not fear what Man can do unto us: God will never viſit us with heavy and dreadful Judgments; for his firey Indignation only conſumes the Adverſaries. We ſhall not have Diſeaſes in our Conſtitution; for Luxury and Vice only relax the nervous Strength of the Body politic, ſtifle the laudable Spirit of Patriotiſm and fill it with ſundry Kinds of Diſeaſes.

We have indeed Fleets to protect us. We have indeed good Friends in Alliance. Be it ſo: But muſt we, pray, truſt in our Strength, and neglect to call upon the God of War for the Bleſſings of Succeſs upon our Fleets and Armies? We render unto *Cæſar* the Things that are *Cæſar*'s; Tribute to whom Tribute is due, to maintain our Rights. And we do well my Brethren; Taxes were never more neceſſary, never

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in the Support of a better Cauſe. But while we render unto *Cæſar* the Things that are *Cæſar*'s, muſt we forget to render unto GOD, the Things that are GOD's, to fear him from whom all our Help cometh? We have indeed Juſtice and Equity on our Sides: we go not to War through Views of Ambition or unlawful Intereſt: We only ſtand againſt the Inroads of the Oppreſſors, of them that would willingly ſpoil our Goods and eat us up.—Be it ſo. But this perhaps may not do: Who can tell whether our paſt Offences may not have provoked GOD to make us thus a Prey to our Enemies; we ſhould certainly therefore do well to break off our Sins by Faſting and Humiliation, Prayer and good Works, that he may not quite give us up to the Oppreſſor; but that we may ſtill hope, that the LORD will hear our Cry, and will help us, that GOD to whom Vengeance belongeth will ſhew himſelf, and avenge the Evil-doer. It is this our Father in Heaven, that can only deliver us from all Evil, can give us Peace upon honourable Terms, Succeſs to all our Undertakings, Proſperity to our Nation and Salvation to ourſelves. To him therefore, let us always remember to commit ourſelves as unto a faithful CREATOR with Well-doing: Of him let us ſeek Deliverance in the

the Time of Troubles, and to him let us always give Thanks (as is our bounden Duty) not only with our Lips, but in our Lives, by giving up ourſelves to his Service and walking before him in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs.

FINIS.